



Doug Duncan Reports

News About Montgomery County, Maryland September 2004

Boosting Homeland Security

In an effort to further enhance homeland security in Montgomery County, I have submitted legislation to the County Council that would create a new Department of Homeland Security to oversee and coordinate the programs that are meant to keeping our community safe in this post-9/11 world.

The department will be responsible for emergency management, disaster preparedness, security in County facilities, public health emergency preparedness, community outreach, and grants and other funding for homeland security efforts.

This new department, with its overall responsibility for terrorism prevention, will boost the security of our homeland and ensure more cooperation within County government. The world is a very different place, now, and it's essential that we remain vigilant in the face of potential dangers. That means using every available resource to protect our residents from harm.

A public hearing will be held on the proposal on October 5 at 1:30 p.m. in the County Council Office Building, 100 Maryland Avenue, Rockville.

Remaining a Leading Technology Center

Montgomery County built on its role as a leading technology center when we recently opened the exciting new Silver Spring Innovation Center, located at the corner of Georgia Avenue and Blair Mill Road. I'm pleased to report that the center is already 70 percent filled, with 25 out of the 32 offices leased. The 20,000-square-foot building also has conference rooms and training rooms.

In addition, it will serve as a base for staff from the Department of Economic Development working with small and minority businesses and will host training and seminars designed to help small and minority businesses expand and prosper.

The Innovation Center is a symbol of our commitment to making the investments and hard decisions now to ensure

that Montgomery County remains one of the world's leading technology centers well into the future.

Urging Back-to-School Pedestrian Safety

When the current school year started the end of August, more than 140,000 children filled classrooms around the county. This means additional pedestrians walking through neighborhoods and crossing streets to school. Combined with the shorter periods of daylight as we head into Fall, means that drivers must be extra vigilant in watching for pedestrians, stopping for school buses and slowing down, especially in marked school zones and on neighborhood streets.

In support of pedestrian safety, we recently announced a campaign of stepped up enforcement against drivers who speed, run red lights and fail to stop for school buses.

Our pedestrian safety partnership with Montgomery County Public Schools is helping to improve safety at schools and the surrounding neighborhoods, plus we have an ongoing effort to evaluate and upgrade pedestrian safety at all our schools.

Launching New "Go Montgomery!" Bus Service

No one who is disabled should be deprived of service on our bus system because of accessibility issues and I was pleased to have recently launched a new "Go Montgomery!" transportation initiative to ensure that will never happen in Montgomery county. As part of our latest expansion of service, all buses in our fleet will be accessible – either by ramp or lift – for passengers with disabilities.

The new service has also added 15 more compressed natural gas (CNG) buses which brings the total to 16 percent of the Ride On fleet. The new CNG buses will replace the oldest and most polluting diesel buses. They are low-floor, accessible buses that allow the driver to automatically or manually operate a wheelchair ramp that operates from the floor. This means that no wheelchair lifts are required. The new buses also are wide and roomy with large, low windows.



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Getting from point A to point B in the county is rarely easy for any of us, but it's especially difficult for our friends. Neighbors and co-workers living with disabilities. I'm proud that we have been able to ensure that every Ride On bus on every route is accessible to the disabled.

The same initiative provided for improved schedule reliability on seven routes, enhanced frequency on four routes and provided service to two new transit centers at Shady Grove Road and Traville Road and in the Fallsgrrove Village Center across from Shady Grove Hospital.

Detailed bus schedules are available by calling the County's transit Information Center at 240-777-7433 or visiting www.montgomerycounty.md.gov/RideOn.

Issuing the Annual Report

My 10th Annual Report as County Executive, which was released September 1, highlights accomplishments on County government in Fiscal year 2004 and reflects the realization of a vision I laid out for our community a decade ago. I'm pleased to report that we are enjoying a strong economy and a good quality of life while making great strides in protecting our residents and our environment from harm.

The 2004 Annual report can be found online at www.montgomerycountymd.gov, go to County Executive and click on current Annual Report. Printed copies are available in Montgomery County Public Libraries and Regional Services Centers or by calling the Office of Public Information at 240-777-6530.